

JACK BARNABY

HENRY
JAMES
ROGERS



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"SHE IS THE FUTURE MRS. BARNABY"

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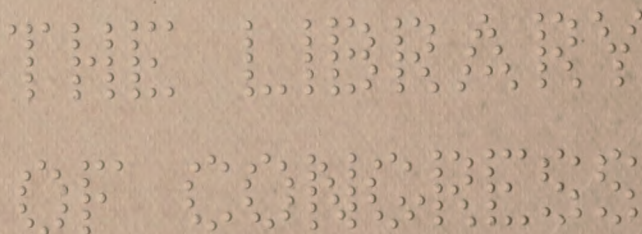
Jack Barnaby

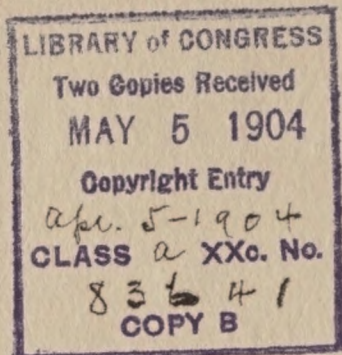
By
HENRY JAMES ROGERS



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ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL

Jack Barnaby

Issued May, 1904



DEDICATED
TO
YOU

ILLUSTRATIONS

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JACK BARNABY's apartment was on —th Street, overlooking the park. Its furnishings were quiet, as was seemly for a scribbler, but with a very decided tendency toward the artistic. In the study were evidences that the owner both worked and idled. The desk, in the corner by the window, held a generous bronze inkwell, a capacious blotter, and sundry small articles—framed photographs, statuettes in bronze, and was more like a woman's work-

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shop than that of a mere man. But Jack was not a mere man; he was a writer, and therefore presumably endowed with sensitive and analytical qualities exceptional. He loved luxury, but had certain uncomfortable, puritanical ideas on Duty, with a capital. Perhaps this was the reason for the straight-backed desk chair, while on the other side of the room was a huge Turkish divan, with a variegated multitude of pillows.

Already Barnaby had made a hit with his short stories and dialogues. Lately, he had been doing some rather more ambitious work on a

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problem novel, and was only waiting for a "spell" in which to complete it.

It was late one afternoon in February that Jack came home with a look of unwonted excitement in his face. For a few moments he wandered about aimlessly, then sat down on the divan, and, taking a photograph from his pocket, set himself to examine it by the fast-fading daylight. The picture was of a young girl, with wavy hair, a mutinous, tip-tilted nose, and a mouth which seemed just ready to break into a smile.

"No," Jack said to himself, mu-

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singly, "she is not pretty; but she is the future Mrs. Barnaby. Good evening, Mrs. Barnaby," he said aloud, addressing the picture, with a humorous twist to his clean-cut lips. "Good evening, Mrs. Barnaby, I really have so many things to talk over with you that I am at a loss to know just where to begin. Could you listen to me, do you suppose, for an hour?" He settled himself more comfortably and lighted a cigarette. So much had happened in the last twenty-four hours that there had been a sort of moral eruption, which had at once modified him, his plans, his mode of living,

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even his philosophy of life. There had been no drifting until matters settled themselves; his new life had begun with the answer a woman had given to a question. This had happened six hours ago. He was procrastinating, he thought with a smile. He had always tarried in pleasant places until driven out; but now, to-morrow, he must go to her and put himself into her hands. If she loved him enough it would be all right—but did she? He closed his eyes, concentrated his will, and summoned before his mental vision a picture of Margery, clear-eyed, calm and sweet. He imagined him-

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self talking to her, telling her the story of his whole life. He reviewed his "Wanderjahr" silently, almost sullenly, for, with a newly awakened conscience, he saw every weakness and petty failing, and it was a relief to remember the two years which immediately followed his father's failure and suicide. These were years of privation and endurance; of perseverance and pluck in the face of circumstances. And he had fought them alone, because his widowed mother had gone back to her home in the South, enabled after the settlement to eke out a slender existence.

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It was all easy up to the time he met Helen Langdon. He was twenty-five at the time, and thoroughly discouraged and disheartened. She was older than he, married to a man she did not love, childless, frivolling away her life in a round of empty social duties. Their two bitternesses had come together. She had comforted him, and helped him; he had given her his true and loyal friendship, a devotion akin to love, but farther from it than hate. Honest and single-minded, he threw himself and his whole strength into the struggle for success along the lines she led

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him. He went to her, and, with boyish enthusiasm, confided to her all his plans, his hopes, his dark hours of despair. He was sure of her affectionate interest, and made continual demands upon her sympathy. He did not know she loved him, loved the man, and loved the boy. But one day, in rapid sentences, she told him of her ruined life, of her marriage to a man whose love had not outlived the honeymoon; of her loneliness in the big, childless house. All the pent-up agony of years was poured out to his willing ear, though he but half comprehended what it all meant.

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He listened, growing vaguely uncomfortable as her emotion increased, and when at length she told him that she loved him, that she had feared and hoped until she could stand the uncertainty no longer; that it was impossible that he did not care for her, that he *must*, that it would kill her if—and she held out her hands to him, those beautiful hands he had kissed so reverently, so that he took them in his own and drew her towards him, wondering if the aching pity he felt for her were indeed love. He looked into her eyes, and, with a sudden shock, saw in them the

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naked image of the woman, robbed of all her higher attributes. And of that look was born a desire so fierce that it threw her, panting, into his arms. Almost at the same instant he was conscious that he was very angry with her. She had been his idol, his impeccable woman-friend—a far-away creature of mysterious powers, not wholly an angel, only partly a woman. And now she stood before him, subject to him. The pride of the male was flattered, while the spiritual man recoiled and would have held him back,—for, in the inner recesses of his soul, where no woman had ever

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penetrated, was an altar to the pure image of Her who should share his life and be the mother of his children. All these years he had kept himself for her. When desire had mastered him, it had been a physical thing in which his soul had no part. But this was different; he knew that when she touched him something would go out from him that he could never hope to recover; that in answering the evident call of her baser nature he would lower the standard he had endeavored to live up to and open to profanation the inner closet of his soul.

And all the time he was holding

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her in his arms. After all, what mattered the dreams of his boyhood! Dared he hoped ever to be in a worldly position to make any legitimate tie? Here in her arms, pillowed on the round splendor of her breast, he could be happy; could forget in her embrace the petty sordidness of his life. He knew he would suffer. Suffer because he must live a lie; that he had made a life which, although not unlike that of many other men, had never seemed right to him. Yet his arms closed more tightly around the sensuous, yielding body.

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The weeks and months passed, tumultuous joy alternating with great nervous depression; the first triumph of possession passed, he knew that he did *not* love her. Helen had given her mind and heart before she had given herself; she had ransacked her treasure-house, had used her best to win him, so that she had nothing new to offer. Secure in his loyalty, although she soon suspected his love was not like hers, she settled down into a routine, making an irregular situation as regular as possible and thus adding another rivet to the chain that bound Jack to her.

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While Jack was grateful, he was unable to forget the other woman, the Helen whose sympathy and intelligent help had lifted him out of desperate straits. Even in the most passionate days of their union, he had a half cynical regret of their more mystical relation of the past. Some days when he sat writing and waiting for her, he would wish nervously that she would not come, and yet if the hour struck and she were late he would writhe in an agony of impatience until he held her in his arms. And on these days he would be more wildly passionate in his caresses,

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more fervent in his protestations, as an atonement for the unspoken treachery.

But though Helen was happy, she was not blind, and she was jealous. She told him her doubts and her fears, and he shut his firm lips wearily when for the hundredth time he had said:

“I will love you always.”

She tried to believe him.

She made a mistake when she became over-exacting, over-violent in her demonstrations, more mistress than friend, forgetting that it was his mind she had first touched and catering only to his senses, and

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while these thrilled as eagerly as ever in her embrace, he became more brutal and violent, for he hated himself that their meetings should have sunk to the level of the physical, and was angry with her for allowing it. She *would* not understand. The day came when they were enemies, joined by a physical tie made strong by habit. He hated her and desired her, while in her, hate and love strove mightily and together shook her soul into a frenzy that was well-nigh madness.

Jack's work suffered, and his talent became sterile as in the days

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when Helen had first loved him. He broke down and was ordered away. He went South to his mother. It was six months before they met; she was saner, and he was well and fully restored to his normal vigor—mental and physical.

He determined that there should be no renewal of the old relation. He wrote to her before he returned to the city:

“The folly of the last three years can have no renewal. I must work to live. You know what it did for me. If I were rich I would have taken you away, and when your husband had divorced

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you I would have married you. As matters stand I have nothing to offer. I had rather you were my *friend*. Try and help me to find my old felicity of expression."

Helen answered him.

"You have put into words what I have most desired—to become once more your *friend*."

But she *lied*, for the old desire burned her flesh. She strove to forget that her arms were empty and drugged herself with promises. "He will come back," she said to herself. "In a little while he will come back." She did what she could to

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charm him, but the man was fighting. He kept as much as possible out of the way of temptation.

In January he had met Margery. They loved. There was no reason, no passion. As their hands had clasped they knew that each had been waiting.

The door-bell rang. Jack sat up suddenly; the fire was dead. He struggled to his feet as the bell rang a second time. He went to the door and flung it wide open. David Dix came in stamping the snow off his arctics.

“Where the devil have you been, old man?” he said, “we waited half

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an hour for you and then dined. We called you up on the 'phone, but the snow had put your end out of order so the fellows delegated me to come and rout you out. What is the matter? You 're white! Seen a ghost?"

Jack laughed a little awkwardly.

"Yes, a few. I think I have been asleep. Come in and have a drink, while I get into my togs. We go to Eames' Studio to-night, don't we? The annual Tea—I can't quite remember."

"Yes, go and get ready. I say, Jack, have you dined?"

"No, but I don't mind."

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“Um, that is serious. Love or liver, Jackie?”

The next day Jack went to Margery and told her of his life and struggles much as he had dreamed it the previous night. It had not been easy, for Margery had sat white and silent, occasionally putting her hand on his with a gesture of caress, but until the end she never spoke. He was glad that the record of the past nine months had been clean?

There was a long silence.

“I am very sorry for her, Jack. She loved you. Will you see my uncle to-night?”

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“Yes; the sooner the better.” Jack stood up and squared his broad shoulders. He set his lips tight, and there was a look of determination on his face that cheered Margery, who was by no means confident as to his reception by the choleric Mr. Perry. Margery knew that her uncle had ambitions, and she knew, too, that he was not easily persuaded. However, let Jack go to his ordeal with all the courage he would have naturally. His cause was good, even if he had little to back it with. They made no plans; they talked little—the presence of each was enough for the other.

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Jack Barnaby's interview with Mr. Perry was calm and serene. It was unexpectedly so. He only required that, until hearing from him further, Jack was not to see Margery. It was nearly a week when he received a brief note informing him that Mrs. Perry and her niece were sailing for Europe that day. It also stated that the writer had requested his niece to forego any correspondence with Mr. Barnaby for the present, and that she would herself inform him. Jack was incredulous. In the next mail came a note from Margery, written evidently in great distress. For the

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most it was formal and rather non-committal. At the end, however, she wrote, "Do not forget anything I have said. It was all true, and always will be true. The darkest hour of the night is the one before dawn. Wait." And he waited. He cursed his poverty, for he understood the unspoken decision in Mr. Perry's note, and its implication. He was sure that some pressure had been brought to bear that Margery should yield with barely a murmur. But he had faith in her. It was some time before he was able to fully grasp the situation. Her coming into his life had been so sudden,

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everything in their short acquaintance so unconventional, that her disappearance seemed part of the natural sequence of events. It was only as the days became weeks that he realized she was gone, not to return.

He shut himself up to work. His intimates knew that it was his habit to write with breathless energy, and to loaf with an idleness as absolute, and they never disturbed him. He had always worked fitfully, even when he was in danger of going hungry during the off times, but nothing had deterred him. He now began with renewed energy on the

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book which he had been writing at odd moments for the past six months, and in which he believed.

The glamour of Margery's presence had blinded him to the practical side of life. His own wants had been few, and for several years he had been able to satisfy them. Now, suddenly, he saw that he was poor. His summary rejection had come, doubtless, from that cause. Money—or, rather, the lack of it. He would have liked to write to her, but dared not. She had said, "Wait!" Well, he would trust her.

He worked diligently, and the book was at last finished. He had

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been shut up alone for several weeks, only going out for his meals and a little air. He had seen no one, for his friends, respecting his privacy, never ventured to break in upon him unless the period dragged itself to some unwonted length. Dix was just thinking it was time to call at the flat, when a telephone message announced the end of the "spell," and that Jack was giving a dinner in honor of the event. He was very confident of success; and that night there was an unusual boyish ring in his voice and a light in his eyes that did not escape the notice of his companions. They

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found him more confident than his wont, but shared his enthusiasm. They could not guess that it was the hope of the future that made the radiance in the face so often hard, while no one knew that next to Jack's heart lay a little note, without date or signature, and which had said:

“Dear, I am in trouble. I cannot write of it. You must trust me, whatever happens, and believe in my love, I am forbidden to write to you, and I fear our absence will be prolonged. Once more I must tell you—I love you.”

Though he was profoundly dis-

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tressed that she should be in trouble, it gave him an immense joy to feel that before long he could take her away from her people if she chose to follow him, and to know that this was no dream, but a tangible reality which lay in the sheets of manuscript in his desk.

He did not answer her note as he had at first intended, he wanted to send her the publisher's letter. One morning it came—that letter. Before he broke the seal he knew. There was a deathlike numbness in his fingers, and a spasm around his heart that nearly choked him. When he spread it out before him

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the letters blurred, and he hesitated. Perhaps he was wrong; perhaps that intuition that had never yet been in fault had this time failed. He read the letter through twice, slowly.

“Stick to short stories, Barnaby,” it ran; “that is your forte, and what the public wants. ‘Clouds’ would have pleased an earlier generation, but it is too ‘hifalutin’ for to-day. Wait and try again in a year or two.” It ended with a few friendly words, for the writer was a personal friend of Jack’s, and he was sorry.

Jack sat motionless. He felt as

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though a blow had been aimed at him by a giant and had struck him through a pad. It had not killed him, it had not even stunned him, but it had strained every joint, every muscle in his body, jarred his brain so that he had ached physically and was unable to have any coördinate thought. He turned over the rest of his mail, opened and read its contents mechanically. The last was a little gray note. It said: "You are all I have to depend upon." He had read it several times before he recognized the writing, and then the real depth of his powerlessness to help

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her burst over him. He was nothing, *could* be nothing, and in the hour of her need, the very first time she called upon him he must fail her. She did not know it yet, she need not know it, but might rest happily in the knowledge that he loved her and would help her. There was a confused murmur in his head that reiterated over and over again, "Help her!" "You cannot!" "You cannot help her!" Hours passed while he sat there in his chair, his head bowed in his hands, powerless to react. And when at length he started up, the gray dawn was stealing in

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between the blinds. He stared around him, and the familiar objects were strange shapes in the half light. The wide-spread wings of the "Winged Victory" mocked him with their free, upward sweep. For a moment he watched it and murmured between his teeth "Victory"—he who had failed! He got to his feet unsteadily, dizzy and confused by his long vigil and the strain of emotion. He stumbled over a book and fell heavily like a thing inert, striking the statue so that it, too, rocked and fell. He lay there a few moments dazed by the shock and the blow. Some-

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how he extricated himself and, conscious only of an intolerable pain in the back of his head, threw himself on his bed without troubling to undress. David, some hours later, found him sleeping heavily. He woke as his friend came in. There was little conversation between them, and Dix went away feeling profoundly disturbed. Only once before had he seen Jack in this state of prostration—mental and physical. As he was walking down towards his own flat he remembered that it was a woman who had put Jack on his feet. That woman was Helen Langdon,

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and she had just come from the South. Without hesitating, David turned in the direction of Fifth Avenue.

Mrs. Langdon was at home, and received him cordially. When he had stated his case, she smiled. Jack was down, and his friend in the hour of need turned to her as the only person able to lift the fallen man. If Dix had known what he was doing, and the peril he was preparing for his unsuspecting friend, he might have hesitated on the threshold of the Fifth Avenue mansion, and if he could have read the true meaning of the imperturbable

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smile in his hostess's face, he would even then have tried to recall the words he had just spoken.

However, he went away with a load lifted from his heart, and secure in the feeling that he had done the very best possible thing in the very best possible way.

An hour later Helen stood before her mirror, pulling on her long gloves, smiling at her reflection, and letting her eye wander critically from the top of her fur toque to the tip of her patent-leather boot. She was satisfied. The lines of her perfect figure were mature, and the soft folds of her white cloth gown

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chastened the full curves. Jack had a preference in dress. Helen knew the value of little things, and now that she was coming into her own again (she drew a long, quivering breath), now she would have no jarring note in that perfect meeting. She would not heed the very smallest admonition of fear—she was going to *him*; he *needed* her; there was no one else that could take the place that she had held in his life, not even Margery—strangely enough, she had not thought of Margery before. She had been so much occupied with herself she had not had time to wonder what had

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become of that Other woman, and now she dismissed the thought as without consequence. Jack Barnaby was hers. She was not boasting when she claimed to have made him. She had given him of her best, and it was good; she had taught him to know his own power, how to use it, and, better still, had, with her own great love, taught him how to draw real women, not mere dolls. If he had suffered, he had learned the better to portray suffering. She was conscious of this; somehow, she had expected that he would understand, and she had been hurt because he had not

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appreciated it. But, loving him, she thought of his faults tenderly. She had not always been so lenient; during those long months when he had been away she had been angry with him—had vowed to punish him bitterly when he came back to her. She had never admitted to herself that he *might not* come back to her. Even when he had announced his coming marriage, she had been only momentarily depressed by this obstacle to the renewal of her happiness. She would not have considered his marriage a serious hindrance—one that time and patience could not do away with. Perhaps

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nothing but death would have entirely discouraged her. She gathered her fur-lined mantle around her and went down into the hall, where a servant opened the door for her. There was nothing in her manner to betray the excited thrill that shot through her as she swept into the air. She remembered the first time she had gone to him, and she felt to-day much of the same agitation. Then, as to-night, she was going to the pretty little apartment where she had given herself, body and soul—where the rooms were full of memories, and each corner, each picture, each little orna-

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ment, held some perfume of the old days. As she walked rapidly up the avenue, she wondered if the delicate aroma of sandal-wood still clung to the Turkish corner. It was so faint and evasive that she had spent days trying to discover whence it came. Jack had laughed as he watched her bury her face in one pillow after the other.

“It is a trick I learned in India two thousand years ago,” he had always insisted.

She could see the writing-table, with its medley of the useful and ornamental—she had given him the massive inkstand and the frivolous

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“art nouveau” paper-weight that stood beside it, “just for contrast.” Above the desk were the photographs of his father and mother, in plain oval frames, while from among the papers her own face looked up. Was it there? Did the “Golden Stair” still hang in its old place; and the little original of “Chip,” that she had given him on his birthday—was it over the piano?

It was quite dark when she reached the house, and she hesitated a moment. What would she say? She had meant to rehearse the scene, and all the way she had been thinking of the room—as

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though it mattered! Yet she knew that it mattered. She knew that the big "Winged Victory" would give her courage from its usual place; even the plaster imps on the mantel would grin a welcome, they had seen her so often. But suppose he had changed it all, so that she could find no trace of herself? For the first time she shivered and was afraid.

The janitor put her in the lift and sent her up. He was a new man and looked at her curiously. She flushed under his half-insolent scrutiny. Very carefully she fitted her key to the lock. How long ago it

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was since she had said, jestingly, that no man dare give a woman the key to his door, and he had taken her seriously. As they had parted friends she had kept the key. So to-night she walked in on him unannounced, moving softly, that the ruffle of her skirts might not betray her. She stood in the door a full minute before he saw her.

He was sitting in front of the fire, staring into the glowing embers. The slender, powerful figure drooped listlessly. Every line in his pale face was hard and hopeless; his eyes, heavy-lidded and red-

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rimmed from sleeplessness, were bright with fever. Helen stood trembling in the doorway. She longed to throw herself on him, break through the ice of his desolation, warm him to life under her caresses, cover and protect him from the hurt he was enduring,—yet all the passionate love which surged from her heart was forced back by the sight of a little photograph on the floor which had fallen from his hand. Suddenly there rose in her an unreasonable and unreasoning hatred of the woman who, when he needed her most, had left her lover, to wander in the

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gardens of Europe. Her face grew hard and evil in an instant, till love conquered, and Jack, looking absently in the little mirror under the mantel shelf, saw a beautiful, familiar face.

Jack drew a long, sobbing breath; he had sat there for hours trying to think, trying to piece out the future from the fragments of the past. He thought of Margery and of all he had hoped to do for her, and of the distance that had grown so great since the previous day. He knew that the way before him was very hard; he had no right to ask her, to ask any woman to wait.

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It was so much further than he thought,—that day when he could claim her. Was it worth while? He had lived along happily enough: what was the use of all this struggle? For what? A companion, and children, and more anxiety and worry, sorrow and pain and death. It was all very elusive, and perhaps the gain was not worth the effort. Helen's face came before him continually. That was not what he had dreamed of, but it was love, it was companionship. She had been very tender and very loving until—there lay the trouble—when their relation had become a habit

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her exactions had worried him. Married, might it not be the same? He had better forget Margery. He would go back to work; creep away out of all that reminded him of the old life. Helen was in the room everywhere. He had intended to change his quarters but had delayed. Now he would do so. He would fight this lethargy that was stealing over him—to-morrow; yes, to-morrow. To-night he was tired, oh, so tired, and his head was empty and heavy. If Helen had only remained the friend! If he could only go to her and let her put her soft hands on

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his head as she had done in the years long ago, when he had been just as miserable and sick at heart as to-night. Margery should have been there—poor little Margery! She was not to blame; no, not to blame! But Helen! Why did Helen haunt him? He could feel her soft caress! She seemed to pervade the atmosphere with a gentle aroma of violets—like a memory, faint and persistent. Ah! if she would only come. But no, no, he did not want to see her; it was Margery,—fresh, whole-souled and joyous; *she* would have stopped that buzzing in his head. Where did that perfume

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come from? Was he dreaming? Would it go if he stirred? If he raised his head he would see her—Helen? no, Margery?—no, it was Helen who wore the violets. Once she had come to him in a floating white frock and a bunch of violets in her hand—she was very beautiful!

He looked up and saw the face. He drew a long, quivering, sobbing breath. It was Helen, the Helen of long ago. He had a faint idea that he was very ill and that this was part of the illusion of his brain. He rose unsteadily and held out his arms. She was real.



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She took him unawares, all his defences down, and still only half conscious of the reality of anything but his defeat, his utter loneliness, and the warmth of her presence. The past years were obliterated; he was a boy again obeying her caprices. And she was his!

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In the room she had left, Jack stood alone. His face paler, his mouth harder than when Helen had watched him from the door. With her presence had gone the intoxication, all the passion, all the illusion, and in its place a sickly loathing of himself and her. He saw

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the past rise up before him—Margery! What she had meant to him, and now—the present—the Woman, the one who had just left him. In his heart he said good-by to all the cherished hopes. He acknowledged himself beaten, that there was no strength in him, and that the tie he had so fondly considered as broken held him as fast as ever. He writhed under the shame of it. His manhood revolted at the slavery. He would not! He said it aloud—"I will not." But his voice was unsteady. Once before he had said, "I will not," and in the supreme moment when he had

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thought himself free for all time, and bound by another and dearer bond, he had surrendered.

He threw himself face down on the divan, and dispassionately, moment by moment, went over the details of Helen's visit. He endeavored to recall the ecstasy of that moment when he had held her in his arms and felt the warm rain of her kisses on his lips, but it was all gone. He was shocked at the quick capitulation of his senses; he was distressed by the recoil. Was he to be loyal to no one, faithful in nothing? He had nothing but shame. Even if Margery came

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back to him, what had he to offer her? Could he be sure that even her dear presence would keep him in the face of temptation? Would it not be more manly now to put all thought of her away, break the fragile link that bound them, and remain faithful in deed if not in heart to the woman who had just left him? After all, he reflected bitterly, he was a creature of circumstances, and if there were any manhood left in him he must protect the girl he loved from himself. He smiled grimly. In his mind he placed the two women side by side. The *girl*,—pure, full of the joy of

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living, loving with her whole heart and mind, trusting him, believing in him, innocent of evil but not ignorant, forgiving and tolerant; and the *woman*,—sensuous and strong, loving and passionately vindictive. He knew that if it had been any other woman it would not have been the same; he knew that Margery, girl as she was, was still too world-wise to have counted against him a casual surprise of the senses, but that was different. This woman had been a part of himself, the nobler part indeed, until she chose the baser. She had been his intellectual companion, and had

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stimulated his talents and his ambition, and if she had never touched his heart it was because he was waiting. Oh, the pitiful irony of it! The desecration of his sanctuary, the violation of his inmost soul that he had kept for her. No! There was nothing left. He had failed everywhere. He turned restlessly. His head ached worse than ever and was maddening; he could not think coherently, and the pain in the back of his neck was confusing. If his mother had only been nearer. He was sure her hand—or was it Margery he wanted? He sat up, and the familiar objects

JACK BARNABY

jeered at him. It was all Helen—Helen. He felt the potency of inanimate objects. Perhaps if he had moved away, had left the scented pillows and all the familiar entourage of the old relation, perhaps indeed this irremediable thing would not have occurred. He rose to his feet unsteadily. He was ill, he knew. One thing he must do before he let himself go, let himself die perhaps—only, and his clean-cut lips twisted bitterly, men did not die at these times; he must cut the last little link in the beloved chain. He was very ill, his mind wandered a little and he thought

JACK BARNABY

Margery had come in and he was talking to her. Then the reality came home to him and he wrote her. He sent her a letter received from Mr. Perry which was not a too polite request to desist from further pretensions to her hand. Jack said:

“The enclosed needs no comment. I regret that Mr. Perry should have considered it necessary. Recent events, however, have gone to prove my inability to reach the monetary standing to be held by your husband. Rather than bring any trouble into your life and at the risk of making you

JACK BARNABY

unhappy for a time, I wish to withdraw from an engagement entered upon without due reflection. Believe me I am cruel for your sake, and my affection and highest esteem are yours always.

“John Barnaby.”

He addressed it carefully, rang for the janitor and handed him the letter. “Register it,” he said, “and then telephone Mr. Dix to come round and—Sam, you might help me to my bed, the floor keeps coming up and trying to strike me—man! hurry up! the ‘Winged Victory’ is falling! Can’t you see it? Come away.” Jack stumbled to

JACK BARNABY

his feet, and threw his hands out as though to protect his face. Sam shook his head, and grasping the delirious man by the arm half led, half carried him to his bed. David came in answer to the frightened message of the janitor. He found his friend growing violent. Two names were continually on Jack's lips, and as the sick man raved David grew to understand some of the things that had been a mystery to him. So it was that when Helen came for news and begged to go to him, David refused to let her in, and remained obdurate in spite of her prayers and entreaties.

JACK BARNABY

She had hurt his friend enough, David thought grimly. It should not happen again. The fever left Jack very weak and with no vitality or apparent wish to live. The doctors were puzzled and questioned David, who closed his lips and shook his head.

Over in Paris Margery received and read the letter, but was unconvinced. She knew that her whole happiness lay in the man who had repudiated her, and save him she must. He was in danger, and with the quick intuition of the loving she divined the cause, and the answer to this letter was among

JACK BARNABY

the first bits of the outside world that Jack received. It said briefly that she understood, and that no ghost of past or present could or would frighten her. She knew that she and she alone held the key to his happiness and she would not believe the contrary unless he himself said so, and then only when looking straight into her eyes. The letter was vigorous and in his weakness he wept over it. From that day on he began to recover. When he was able he wrote her about his illness. He made no reference to her letter, but said at the end: "I know my duty and shall do it."

JACK BARNABY

Then there was silence between them. Alone Margery wept and prayed for strength to fight and the wisdom with which to win. Her whole heart and soul went out in tenderness toward the man, and she forgave her own suffering because she loved him. Barnaby waited. At length he went back to his work. He slid into his old habits and Helen into her old place. Outwardly it was as though Margery had never existed. From time to time a formal note was exchanged between them.

PART II.

Eighteen months ago Margery had gone away: eighteen months ago she had given her heart and faith to the man who had kept the one and broken the other. Jack stood by the window. The Park trees were smart in russet and brown, a final effort to be gay before winter should strip them and leave them only long, shivering, naked branches.

It was three months since he had heard from Margery and in spite of the rigid discipline to

JACK BARNABY

which he had schooled himself he was anxious. In his lean face there were traces of the struggle. A loosening about the mouth and a restlessness in the eyes gave the impression that the man had been fretted, and perhaps coarsened by the events of the past months.

He believed more firmly than ever that he had done right,—was *doing* right, was living up to the very best in himself; in short, was doing his duty. He had endeavored to put Margery out of his mind. He had written her friendly letters, and more than once he had

JACK BARNABY

tried to bring her to acknowledge his position. She refused. He let the matter stand. But now, and herein lay the reason for the three months' silence, a new and insurmountable barrier had arisen, of which he had been able to tell her only vaguely. Yet, if there had been any hope left in his heart, he could no longer ignore that it was in vain.

In January Helen had gone South, ill and depressed. She had come North in April, but, though much improved, she started almost immediately for Europe to take a rest cure. Jack only saw her once and

JACK BARNABY

was shocked by her appearance. She bade him good-by almost sullenly and, as he was leaving, she called him back and threw herself into his arms, sobbing wildly.

“Oh! Jack, my darling,” she whispered between her sobs, “you won’t forget me! If . . . I *never* come back, you will always remember me and how I loved you? Good-by, dearest!” And he had stopped her mouth with kisses, holding her in his strong arms. He was puzzled. She had been gone a month before he heard from her. That letter lay in his breast pocket, “Lest I forget.”



"YOUR EYES SO TENDER AND YOUR ARMS AROUND ME"

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JACK BARNABY

“Dear Jack : You have been wondering what has become of me and the why of everything, so this afternoon, while Frederic goes out with Marion to a concert, I am going to write you. Beloved, it is not the first time that I have written you since that awful afternoon when we said good-by. How good you were to me! . . . I never loved you as I did at that moment—your eyes so tender and your arms around me. If I could only have died then! Now I am afraid to die until I have seen you again, and yet perhaps I should be more afraid to see you. I am going to tell you something that will make you happy or very sad and angry. I am

JACK BARNABY

afraid! You don't understand, Jack, Sweetheart, but I am awfully afraid of you.

You know Marion, Frederic's sister. She is a widow. Almost a girl, but *so splendid!* She is always buoyant, always happy. People have wondered why she has never married again and when I asked her she said, 'Why, Helen, what would I say to Dick? And what could I give any man—my whole heart is in Dick. He has left me, visibly, but his love is with me always and no one can replace or displace it.' I asked her then how it was she was so light-hearted, and she said, quite gravely, 'My husband and I were so happy together

JACK BARNABY

that I dared not grieve. If he felt I were wretched, he could not enjoy the rest he has won. *Some day, somewhere, we will be together again!*' You must not mock, dearest, because it is all very real to her, and she is so sweet and true that I would not do anything to disturb her faith—not that I could, it is too deep-rooted to be easily shaken.

You know I *never* had any friends; you were *all* to me since that wonderful day when you came to me, broken and beaten on every side. Even then I wanted to take your head in my arms and kiss you in that little hollow between your eyes. Ah! I love you very much;

JACK BARNABY

more than you can ever understand, for you are only a man, and a man never, never understands that he is a woman's reason for living. I am going to get well, just because I *can't* leave you.

But you are getting impatient. Oh! Jackie, don't you see it's because I am afraid? I am putting off the dreadful moment. And yet you may be glad. *I* am. I am so glad and so proud, Jack; put your arms around me and let me whisper in your ear. There! Did you hear? No? Oh, dearest, come closer! Listen, under my heart lies another little heart! Oh, my God! help me! I am half mad with pain and joy and shame and pride.

JACK BARNABY

After all these years! . . . I can't quite believe it, and yet it's true.

Marion came in just now, she did not go to the concert. She asked me what I was doing and I told her. When I *knew*, Jack, I told her she could tell Frederic if she thought best, all but your *name*. Oh! she was splendid! I have been very uncharitable all my life and I have never believed there were any women good enough not to trample me under foot. But I did not know Marion; I was very wretched and if she had turned away from me then I should have done something desperate. But, no! Marion, God bless her! came over to where I lay, sobbing, and

JACK BARNABY

kneeling down, put both her arms around me and said, 'Don't cry so, Nelly, it isn't fair for the little baby.'

Do you know what she has been doing? Teaching me to laugh! I am learning and I am growing well and rosy. If I cry, or am dispirited or indolent, then comes my sweet sister and says, 'Tut, tut, Nelly, you know you must give him an even disposition and industrious habits.'

We are leaving here to-morrow for Normandy. Frederic has rented a house for me, as I have decided to stay abroad until after the event, which is due early in September.

Now that I have told you, I feel happier. A load is off my mind.

JACK BARNABY

I can see what you are thinking,—what Frederic said. Ah! that is one of the hard parts. He is so kind, and goes around trying to look cheerful, but—he knows it isn't his. Marion told him my condition; just bare facts, without any comments. He went out and did not come home until the next day and then he came straight to my room. I was frightened, he looked so stern. God only knows into what depths of hell he went that night, but in the morning he was another man.

‘Helen,’ he said, standing at the foot of my bed, ‘I want to ask forgiveness. When Marion told me, I was angry and I would have killed

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you, for I knew it could not be my child, and, blind with rage, I would have gone to you; but Marion stood in my way and refused to let me pass, so I went out into the night alone. I reviewed our life and I know I have forfeited the right to blame you. I think you will be sufficiently punished. I shan't trouble you any more than I can help, but I want to say that I shall do the best I can for *our* child.' (He emphasized the 'our.') I have been a bad husband; I hope some time you will forgive me. I will ask nothing further; I shall not spy on you; I leave you to your own conscience.' Goodness, my conscience! and yet do you know I believe I

JACK BARNABY

have one somewhere. Oh! Jackie, my darling! I would give half my life to lie in your arms to-night, to know that you were not angry and that you were just a little proud.

Marion says, 'What, Nelly, still writing? I wish you would make me a promise. Promise me that you will never go back to him!' I laughed at her. How can I promise! How do I know! I expect to go back to you. I should die to think I must live without you. There is a new tie added to the old one. Good night, darling!

Your Helen."

Jack knew this letter by heart, but he nevertheless read it carefully

JACK BARNABY

through and then read the cable that lay beside it :

“Mother and son send love.”

That was all, but it had made him dizzy and faint. These were the things that passed through his mind as he stood by the window. He was so absorbed that he did not hear a knock on the door he had left open, and as he turned away Margery walked into the room.

She was dressed in deep mourning and it struck Jack that she was singularly tall.

There was the inevitable exchange of commonplace phrase while Jack seated her, and then the

JACK BARNABY

inevitable constraint fell upon both. With Helen's letter fresh in his mind, Jack forced back all words of joy and love. There was a silence. Each listened to the beating of his own heart.

"You are in mourning," Jack said at length, to break in upon that dangerous silence.

"Yes," she answered simply, "I am all alone now." She stopped a moment. "My uncle and aunt were both killed in an automobile accident last month and ——" The tears welled into her eyes. "Oh! Jack, they have been very kind to me and Uncle never meant to be

JACK BARNABY

cruel. He thought he was doing right, the best thing for me, as he viewed it. He wanted me to tell you that he was sorry and to—to take—care of—his little girl.” She was crying. She wiped her eyes.

“I am very sorry for you, little woman! You are, indeed, alone!” He knew that she expected words that he would dearly love to say and—Helen’s letter burned over his heart.

“Well?” she said at length.

“Margery, I can’t!”

“Why? tell me why? I have a *right* to know. Is it *money*?” she demanded.

JACK BARNABY

“No. I have been successful the past year, and—no, it is something else, something quite insurmountable!” His manner was grave and almost indifferent. Margery’s eyes never left his face.

“Oh! It’s the Other Woman!”

“Yes!” Jack did not look at her, but walked over to the window. He could feel the terrible look in her eyes and see the tense expression of her mouth. He knew she was suffering more intensely than in all her life; he was tortured by the knowledge that she was suffering through *him* and *because* of him. Yet this must be final. There

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must be nothing left. Slowly he took the cable from his pocket and spread it out. He read it again and a little quiver of pain shot through him. Without a word of explanation he handed the yellow slip to the motionless girl. He had been afraid she would make a scene; faint or cry; but she read it, and carefully folding it up, rose, and went over to him where he stood by the window.

“Jack!” He turned and faced her and looked down into two thoughtful gray eyes in whose clear depths there was no trace of bitterness.

JACK BARNABY

“I understand.” She was trying to put into words the knowledge that came to her that this was not the end. She did not know how to say it, for *how* did she know? And what was the end? He must do his duty and she must go her way; but none the less, some day, somehow, his way would be *her* way, and the *right* way. She stood looking up at him.

“I understand. I can’t explain what I feel to be true. The past and the present are hers, but the future is mine. You can shut me out of your life, but you can’t cheat Fate. We may each wander to

JACK BARNABY

the ends of the earth but Fate will, when the time is come, bring us together. I love you, and you love me. That is all. There is no other woman who can stand between us.

“I am leaving you now because I love you enough to help you. Don’t ever forget that I am your best friend.”

“My dear girl,” Jack said, “there can be no future. I have made my life and you have no part, nor ever can have, in it. You must consider me a married man and one quite unworthy of the honor you are doing him. This is final. You will find another who

JACK BARNABY

will protect and help you, and you will be happy in an atmosphere of honest love and affection. I shall never forget you, but shall cherish your memory like the blessing of my dead past. There is no other way. I know what I have to do ; my duty to you and to her,—each is quite clear, and I shall do it.” Jack paused—he had spoken quietly, without undue emphasis, but suddenly broke out passionately:

“But even if she were to die I would not marry you, nor any woman. I loath *myself*, my *weakness* ; to live with me would mean

JACK BARNABY

suffering and bring shame to a woman like you. I had rather send you away with love beaten and hurt in your eyes, than live to watch the slow dawn of scorn, disgust and pity in them. No, this is the end!" He opened the door for her and as she stood on the threshold her eyes rested in his for a moment and she said with a soft thrill in her voice:

"No, Jack, not the end but the beginning." Once in the street she felt very tired; her courage suddenly left her. She had gone to him and—*now* it was over. She had come so far and *now* it was

JACK BARNABY

ended; there was nothing to look forward to.

She felt a jealous pang in her heart. That "Other Woman"—how she hated her! She had always felt rather sorry for her, but now—now she had Jack's *son*—how she hated her!

When he had closed the door behind her, Barnaby went back to his desk. He threw himself down in his chair and, leaning his elbows down on the table, pressed his fingers through his hair, wrinkling his brows and shutting his eyes. He sat up suddenly and his mouth curved into a half cynical, half

JACK BARNABY

whimsical smile. The situation was so droll, so bitterly farcical! By one of those unexpected chances Jack had become a man of means. Hardly a week ago a man had come to him to buy his holding in an old unproductive gold mine in Mexico. He was inclined to laugh at any one who wanted the thing, but his guardian angel had saved him and he had put the matter into David's hands. David sold the claim for half a million! He would have been mad with delight just a short year ago. But now, he reflected, letting his head fall forward, now it meant "Duty." From

JACK BARNABY

the day of the sale Jack felt a sudden sense of smothering responsibility. When the cable came Jack knew what that duty and responsibility were. In the silence of that room which Margery had just quitted, Jack's determination took shape.

While over some of the minor factors of his daily existence, even those pertaining to his pleasure or comfort, Jack would recklessly squander days coming to decision, once his obvious duty clear, he went toward it with unreasoned abruptness. He was moved by a force which he could neither con-

JACK BARNABY

trol nor direct and which only acted under the direct stimulus of necessity. These decisions were never questioned by him. He considered no one in the application, nor whether he made pain for others or himself. Nothing could shake him, nor make him doubtful as to his justification.

So it was that without further consideration he wrote to Helen. He told her briefly that he had received the cable and though the event did not awaken any great joy in him, he believed this was due to the tardy realization of his responsibility. He went on to say

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that years ago there had been a question of her divorce but that his worldly position made it unwarrantable.

“Fate plays queer tricks with men. A gold mine which was partly the cause of my father’s failure has, through recent excavations in the immediate vicinity, become of value. The sale of my holding has freed me from material anxiety. I have also gained recognition in my line and have a position which I now offer you and the child.

In view of the facts in Mr. Langdon’s possession, it would seem to me advisable to hand him this letter. He will, I believe, see the jus-

JACK BARNABY

tice and necessity for a divorce and help you to get it.

Let me hear as soon as possible what you decide. With tenderest messages for your health and happiness, believe me,

Devotedly yours,

John Barnaby."

It was six weeks before the answer came. Barnaby had accepted his future with a calm satisfaction which, if not happiness, was contentment. He knew what answer Helen would make, and his only anxiety was the delay and the inevitable annoyances.

He bought a house at ———, on

JACK BARNABY

the Hudson, and put the men to restore it. He spent most of his time there and personally supervised the work he was having done. His intention was to make his headquarters at the hotel until the house was habitable, and to move in at the first possible moment so as to be on hand while the decorating and furnishing was being completed.

He was very busy and he enjoyed the unaccustomed luxury of buying those things he had admired so long. He was contented, too, knowing that he was doing his duty, and he was endeavoring to

JACK BARNABY

make himself believe that he did it because he wanted to. Margery had gone out of his life. He loved her still, and at times, while wandering over the fine old grounds or the house itself, he would evoke her face and imagine that she was the bride he was awaiting. But these were momentary lapses for which he took himself severely to task.

One morning the letter from Helen came stinging him out of the lethargy into which he had sunk; and, turning the gentle remorse which had been as a balm to his wounded love to black despair

JACK BARNABY

and hopelessness, hardened the man suddenly into an impenetrable and dangerous creature.

“Ah! My Dear Jack:—You have wondered why you have not had an answer to your letter, for to you there has been but one answer possible. You wrote me, to offer me the thing which a year ago would have filled my cup to overflowing; you will be surprised when I say that it has come too late. I think it will be hard for you to understand; and it is hard, very hard, for me to explain; and it is because I have not been able to do so with any degree of satisfaction to myself that it has lain a month unanswered.

JACK BARNABY

A year ago, did I say? Even four months ago, when I told you if you had written me that letter I should have accepted all you offer. To-day, with little Frederic sleeping beside me, I write, dear friend, to say that it is too late. From now on I belong body and soul to that little fragile creature.

Perhaps if I tell you some of the thoughts that have come to me during these past months you can understand the change in me. After I had written you, I felt better, easier, and for a month I waited for the answer; that response which would come out of your full heart and bid you say to me what you have said at last; therefore your letter

JACK BARNABY

was a cruel blow. I was well nigh mad, for Frederic was kind; Marion was more mother than sister to me, and underneath it all I suddenly saw myself, a woman who had strayed with her eyes open and then closed them against every common virtue and loyalty. It was quite vain that I recalled my husband's abandon, his open infidelity, the callousness with which he overlooked my own infidelity at a time when possibly sterner treatment might have brought me to my senses. When his punishment came he stood up under it, accepted it almost gratefully, and it has not been easy for a man as proud as he. No man loving me could have been more thought-

JACK BARNABY

ful or more tender during these past months. It was intolerable to have him rise and overtop the moral stature of my lover.

As my time approached I grew feverishly excited and more than once knelt in the village church and prayed; I, who have not prayed for years. The prayers were voiceless, but God knew it was not to come safely through my trial that I prayed, but that in that day of anguish my soul might be born anew with the child.

He was born at the early dawn, and all day exhausted I slept, so that when I awoke refreshed, but very broken and languid, it was already night. They brought him

JACK BARNABY

in and laid him beside me. His little head lay in the curve of my arm, all the creases of his long sleep wrinkling his little face into the semblance of age; then he opened his eyes and looked straight into mine. I cannot describe the sensation that it gave me, that first look of my son into my eyes, that little creature, flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone, who a few hours ago was only a part of me, and who, though already launched on an individual life, drew its sustenance from my body; and who, though of me yet, was a soul apart; a perfectly pure soul, a body with no desire of any kind, a hardly awakened demand for food; eyes

JACK BARNABY

that had never seen anything, ears that had never heard, a mouth that no human lips had ever touched. I bent my head and would have kissed him; but he opened his eyes again and I brushed his forehead gently. There was much for me to think of before I touched his lips.

The next few days were filled with the usual routine, but daily, as I lay motionless, the wonder grew on me. I had, I knew, tasted the highest joy a woman is permitted to know and I was content.

One day Marion said to me, 'Do you want me to cable?' 'Yes,' I answered, 'tell him we send our love.' I began to realize that you

JACK BARNABY

were still a factor in my existence. I had not forgotten you, but I had eliminated you in the present and in the future.

After I was up, I used to sit for hours with the boy on my lap looking out over the sea, trying to gather and glean strength from his frailty against myself and my overwhelming love for you. Gradually peace settled over me, and I felt my heart grow lighter as the days wore on. I need never be afraid again so long as my child lived; his mother would never do anything that he might not know. I had done him an irreparable wrong, but now my whole life was forfeit to amend.

JACK BARNABY

Frederic came back last week, and very humbly I went to him, and for two hours we talked. I told him that I had loved my child's father for years, that I loved him still and should always love him, but that henceforth we were strangers; we might sometime be friends. I told him all that I have here told you and more of my desire to be good, of my weakness, my distrust. I told him I was punished for my wickedness, and that I knew he could not forget it. Then I begged him in the name of my girlish love, my sin and its consequence, to help me be true to what was best and right and just. He answered me quite simply: 'I

JACK BARNABY

will do my best.' What confessions he made were for me alone and I hold them as sacred.

That is why your letter has come too late. I am only a woman, and I love you, and there will come days of craving for you, hungering for your voice, your touch. I can already feel the intolerable emptiness that will come into my life when I post my letter. For this is the end! I have burned my bridges behind me and henceforth husband and son will protect me against myself.

Even now I can scarcely bear to finish my letter, knowing it is the last I shall ever write you. I would delay the awful moment,

JACK BARNABY

and I know my weakness, but you are free. You never loved me, and you love that other girl. Find her and make her love you. But even in her arms you will never forget me, nor can her innocent love be deeper or more passionate than my guilty one. You are free, and it is I who have freed you; you could never have left me, for when you tried I drew you back. You are rich and free; may you be happy.

Are you wondering why I am not afraid of you? Because, and I speak in a whisper, I know now that it was I who wielded the spell, not you who forced me to be humble. It makes me blush, but I am

JACK BARNABY

glad; it gives me only one enemy instead of two.

And now, let all enmity be forgotten, and let us each forgive the other. Some day we may meet, but may it be as friends.

If you ever pray, let it be for her who loved much. Helen."

It was about a month later that David received the following letter from one of his friends, also a pal of Jack's. It enclosed a clipping:

"Dear David: Jack told us that you would not lend your countenance to the party he proposed to bring to The Towers last Saturday, nor be witness to what you so

JACK BARNABY

aptly termed 'his damnation,' but if you had known how it was to turn out you would not have been so scornful. Really it was the most fitting dramatic ending to a career that has been dramatic and erratic to a degree.

“ You knew, we all knew, that for the past month Jack had been drinking hard and playing the very devil. I remember one night that Jack came into my rooms with that French girl, that you tried to reason with him, and that Jack made a pass at you and cursed you for a meddler. You knew he was drunk and went out quietly, but you let him alone after that and he went along the wide road to hell merrily

JACK BARNABY

enough. We fellows were to blame. Jack was the youngest and the most gifted, but he had money to spend, and he was a good host, and—well, I am not making excuses. You know what happened. There was a stag party at The Towers. He promised us the time of our lives.

“We all went up on the noon express and arrived at the house about four o’clock.

“There was a good deal of stamping about the big empty rooms and some curiosity evinced as to the surprise. Vincent the Silent served drinks and then Jack excused himself.

“‘Boys,’ he said, ‘look around

JACK BARNABY

the house and amuse yourselves, I have an order to give. I'll soon be with you.' So we toddled off. Mack and I went up stairs, and close on my heels came Danny. We found our rooms, and then began to see the rest of the house. Jack's room was on the front overlooking the river, and next to it was a suite of two rooms and bath fit for a princess. We began to suspect that the princess was not far off and that we were going to find her if we looked hard. On the other side of Jack's room is a little den and we put our heads in. We had heard a rustle of skirts, or thought we had, and were sure we had found our princess. Jove,

JACK BARNABY

man, she was there, and a princess! She was small, dainty, with an unmistakable air of distinction in all her little person. She wore black, her coat thrown over a chair, and she drooped as though she were tired. She straightened up as we walked in, and looked at us with clear gray eyes and just a shadow of embarrassment on her face. She looked beyond, inclined her head and turned away.

“Danny popped his head in.

“‘Hello, hello,’ he said in a stage whisper, ‘what have you found?’ And he made an exaggerated bow in the girl’s direction. She did not move, and as some of the other men came in she rose and

JACK BARNABY

went over to the window. I began then to have misgivings and backed toward the door, when an exclamation that was almost an oath made me turn to see Jack, his eyes blazing, standing in the doorway. He was looking at her, and she drew herself up and faced him.

“In two strides he was beside her.

“‘What are you doing here?’ he said roughly. ‘What do you mean by coming—There can be nothing between us!’” He seized her arm and almost shook her. We should have gone, but our curiosity was aroused and so, huddled in the door, we waited.

“‘I have come because you need me,’ she said very softly.



“‘I DON’T CARE, I SHALL STAY’”

JACK BARNABY

“ ‘But I don’t need you ; I don’t want you here. You can have no part in my life. You must go away.’

“She put one hand on his shoulder

“ ‘I am going to stay, Jack,’ she said firmly.

“ ‘I tell you I won’t marry you !’ His voice was rough and deep.

“And then that adorable little girl slipped her other arm around his neck and pulled his face down until her lips touched his, a smile in her eyes, and murmured so low I am not sure I was dreaming.

“ ‘I don’t care, I shall stay.’

“There was an instant’s silence. Jack pushed her back and held her at arm’s length.

JACK BARNABY

“‘Do you mean it?’ And his voice trembled with emotion.

“‘Yes!’ It seemed high time we left, but at the same instant Jack turned and faced us, his arm around the little lady—gone suddenly very limp and white. I have never seen a man look as he looked. He had the radiance of an angel in his face and eyes. His voice rang out clear in the startled silence.

“‘Boys, boys, let me present my wife to you. She has come home sooner than she was expected, but I want you to help me welcome her.’

“We were knocked out that time because we did not know Jack was married, but we did our prettiest, and by common unspoken consent

JACK BARNABY

we came back to the city. We were decidedly *de trop*.

“Read me the riddle if you can.

“The enclosure says he was married on Saturday, but it must have been after we left, for I am sure he was with us from noon on. But I am knocked out, and I have no connected ideas left.

“Yours faithfully,

“H. L. Porter.”

David folded up the letter.

“Married Saturday P.M. by the Rev. Archibald Phillips, Margery Churchill, daughter of the late John Churchill, to John Barnaby of New York,” was what the clipping said.

MAY 5 1904

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